



PHOTO BY PAULA MERRITT / THE MERIDIAN STAR

WHY DO I WEAR PATRIOTIC SCRUBS?

Perrin Burchfield works in Health Information Services at Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. Her husband, Sgt. Chris Burchfield, is a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 150th Combat Engineer Battalion at Key Field. He works in radio and telephone communications. "I wear patriotic scrubs because my husband, Chris, is in Iraq — and that is how I show my support every day," Perrin said. "Chris was deployed to Camp Shelby Aug. 28 and left for Iraq the first week of January 2005. I am very proud of him and wish Chris and all the other soldiers safety in Iraq."

Many 'military' missions in Iraq are humanitarian

First Lt. Kevin W. Posey of Meridian is a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 223rd Engineer Battalion, Company C, out of Charleston, Miss. He and his wife, Julie, have three children, 15-year-old Stephen, 14-year-old Nina and 11-year-old Tyler. The family attends Briarwood Baptist Church.

Kevin is also the operational support officer for the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy at Naval Air Station Meridian.

He says the national news media spend too much time on the bad news about Iraq, and not enough on humanitarian efforts — projects as simple but vital as fighting hunger and restoring clean supplies of drinking water.

By Kevin W. Posey
special to The Star

Like many of us, I have been overwhelmed by the news media's coverage of the war on terrorism. The majority of the news coverage reflects the negative aspects — such as the numerous terrorist attacks and U.S. casualties related to these attacks.

Like any other war, casualties are inevitable. However, as a nation, we must weigh the good with the bad.

Unfortunately, there is not as much coverage of the positive aspects of the war on terrorism as there are on the negative ones. I would like to take a moment to share some of the positive achievements that I experienced while deployed to Iraq.

In April 2003, I was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of a National Guard combat engineer battalion. Our initial mission was to support combat operations as part of the 4th Infantry Division.

Once coalition forces were established in Iraq, we began conducting humanitarian missions concurrently with combat support missions.

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1st Lt. Kevin Posey

restoring water to a local village and hiring local contractors to repair schools in three different villages in the Tikrit area. We also sponsored a school supply drive, during which we took donations of school supplies and clothes for Iraqi children from the American public and distributed them to the local schools.

When we first arrived in Iraq, the civilians from this poverty-stricken country were elated to see coalition forces. Throughout our deployment, we were constantly thanked for their liberation.

Hearing them speak of the atrocities they endured under Saddam Hussein's reign was

truly heartbreaking. There were endless stories of family members being tortured or executed, as well as large-scale starvation throughout the country. The vast majority of the country had been without running water or electricity for several years.

It is true that we have lost loved ones in this war on terrorism and our soldiers are enduring hardships associated with these long deployments.

But, rest assured, the Iraqi population will always be grateful for our nation's sacrifice. For we have given them what we have always taken for granted, democracy and freedom.

Bragging rights

These people submitted "Bragging Rights" stories about the standard of care provided by the staff of Riley Hospital in Meridian.

"I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about my recent stay at Riley Hospital. Everyone we came in contact with was not only highly professional, but also courteous and extremely compassionate.

"Throughout the entire hospitalization process, lab workup, admissions, surgery and post-surgery nursing, my care was excellent. I especially want to thank the nursing staff of the WomanCare Birth Place for their caring hearts and kindness.

"I would like to point out in particular the 5 South evening staff, Judy Harrison and others.

"From the moment I rolled into their area, I and my family were treated by a special kind of caring ladies who are obviously dedicated

to their profession — and to the promotion of exceptional care at Riley Hospital.

"They were always by my bedside to cater to my every need. They often accommodated the needs of my husband, too, by bringing him coffee in the morning.

"Before doing anything to me, Judy and her staff were very careful to explain the details of all procedures to my husband. I cannot offer enough praise for these women and the service they provided us."

Myrna DeBruyne, Meridian



Harrison

"I want to brag on Tiny Cole, a patient care technician in the Rehab Unit at Riley Hospital because she is an excellent worker, willing to do more than assigned. She is highly respected by her peers and co-workers.

"Patients love her. They often ask for her by name. She usually exceeds her customers' expectations. She demonstrates compassion and love for all human beings. She often spends extra time with the elderly patients. She makes them feel like they are the only person in the world. She helps turn a frown into a smile."

Betty Young, registered nurse
and nurse manager